

EXPRESSION OF ENGAGEMENT IN GAMIFIED STUDY SUBJECT

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Abstract

Purpose – To analyze expression forms of engagement during the gamified study subject.

Design/methodology/approach – The qualitative study was being conducted in order to find out how engagement manifests itself among the university students during one semester of gamified study subject. The data were collected during two group interviews and one set of individual interviews. Interviews were conducted after second, third, and fourth month of the semester. Data were analyzed using practical qualitative analysis approach (Bazeley, 2013).

Findings – Study has shown that engagement in gamified study subject manifested itself in long term and short term forms of expression. Data analysis have shown that engagement is expressed in seven forms: behavioral engagement, participation, ardor, flow, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and agentic engagement. All these forms of engagement result easy and hard forms of fun.

Research limitations/implications – The results of this study have shown that engagement is context sensitive. Ability to feel engaged is strongly dependent from personal characteristics of a student. Moreover, the external factors like relationships among group members as well as role of an educator might have significant result on student engagement in gamified study subject.

Research results allow to connect two concepts of engagement. In educational sciences engagement is understood as a long term phenomenon while in game studies it is explained as temporal experience. Applying gamification in university study subject allows to explore what temporal features of engagement does transfer to long term engagement. Research results are also significant in trying to find consensus between two competing approaches towards engagement phenomenon in educational sciences and game studies.

Practical implications – By revealing how engagement is being experienced in gamified study subject it is possible to better understand how different gamification

techniques and mechanics lead to motivational outcomes resulting fun. Also, not all forms of engagement might be desirable in educational context. The results of the study allows broader understanding about the functioning of gamification mechanics which could lead to improved gamified systems used for educational purposes.

Originality/Value – The study takes an original approach in exploring expression of engagement in two overlapping disciplines - educational sciences and game studies. There are very few studies which use qualitative methods for deeper understanding of engagement in gamified learning environments.

Keywords: engagement, gamification, gamified study subject, gamified learning environment

Research type: research paper.

References

Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. SAGE Publications Inc.